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Contact:

Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858

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Siena College 29th Congressional District Poll:

Reed Has Early 44%-30% Lead over Zeller; 26% Undecided

Voters Favor Reed on Issues; Neither Campaign Has Reached Many Voters

Voters Closely Divided on Health Care, Stimulus, Tax Cuts for Wealthy

Loudonville, NY. It is only six weeks until Election Day, however, the race for the open 29th Congressional District seat has not yet grabbed voters' attention. Republican candidate Tom Reed leads Democrat Matt Zeller 44-30 percent, with one-quarter of voters undecided. Although Reed is viewed as better than Zeller on the issues, at least 40 percent of voters cannot choose between the two on every issue, according to a Siena (College) Research Institute poll of likely voters released today. Voters are nearly evenly divided on President Obama's stimulus proposal and offer slim support for his proposal to eliminate tax cuts for the wealthy. They are also split on whether to implement or repeal the recently passed federal health care reform legislation.

"Republican Tom Reed enjoys an early 14-point lead over Democrat Matt Zeller, in what for the moment is a battle of two largely unknown candidates in a district that had been represented – at least for a short time – by a Democrat, but has a significant Republican enrollment edge," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "Reed leads among Republicans by 58 points and independent voters by nine points, while

If the election was tomorrow, who would you vote for?			
	Tom Reed	Matt Zeller	Don't Know/ No Opinion
29th CD	44%	30%	26%
<i>Democrats</i>	16%	60%	23%
<i>Republicans</i>	67%	9%	24%
<i>Independents</i>	40%	31%	30%
Monroe	42%	31%	27%
Chemung/Ontario/Schuyler/Yates	41%	32%	27%
Allegany/Cattaraugus/Steuben	49%	27%	24%

Zeller leads among Democrats by 44 points. One-quarter of all voters, however, are still undecided.

"Reed leads in every region of the district, however, he is strongest in the western southern tier portion of the district. Men give Reed a 21-point edge, while women favor him by six points," Greenberg said.

"While each candidate has virtually the same percentage of voters who have favorable or unfavorable views of them, Reed is unknown to more than half of the voters and Zeller is unknown to more than three-quarters," Greenberg said. "Only 16 percent of voters have seen or heard a Reed commercial and only about one in ten have heard or seen an ad for Zeller."

“The Tea Party movement is viewed favorably by more voters than view it unfavorably. Those who view it favorably are in the Reed camp by a margin of six-to-one, while those unfavorable to the Tea Party side with Zeller better than two-to-one.

Sarah Palin has an 11-point negative favorability rating, while House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s is 27 points negative. More

than two-thirds of voters have an unfavorable view of the United States Congress,” Greenberg said.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...			
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know/ No Opinion
Tom Reed	21%	22%	57%
Matt Zeller	9%	9%	82%
Barack Obama	48%	49%	3%
Tea Party Movement	45%	38%	17%
Sarah Palin	40%	51%	9%
Nancy Pelosi	30%	57%	13%
US Congress	24%	69%	7%

Voters rank jobs (40 percent) as the most important issue for their Member of Congress. The federal deficit (17 percent) is next, followed by health care (12 percent), the Afghanistan war and education (10 percent each), and taxes (nine percent).

Which Candidate Would do a Better Job Representing You in the US Congress on . . .		
Issue	Reed	Zeller
Jobs	37%	23%
Federal budget deficit	37%	22%
Health Care	35%	25%
War in Afghanistan	32%	21%
Education	31%	25%
Taxes	38%	22%
Representing the interests of our community in Washington	35%	24%

“Jobs is the top issue for twice as many voters as the next biggest issue that they say they want their Representative working on in Congress, and voters give Reed a 14-point edge on that issue. They give Reed the edge on all the issues by margins of between six and 16 points. However, at least 40 percent of voters on each question cannot rate one candidate over the other, and Reed does not top 40 percent on any,” Greenberg said.

“Voters split on Obama’s proposed new stimulus plan, with 48 percent supporting and 47 percent opposing. Nearly three-quarters of Democrats support while nearly two-thirds of Republicans and a slim majority of independents oppose. By a small 51-45 percent margin, voters support eliminating tax cuts for the wealthy,” Greenberg said. “Voters split nearly evenly on whether to implement or repeal the health care reform legislation enacted this year.”

“This race has not yet heated up. The candidates are not well known, the majority of the electorate hasn’t heard from either campaign and the ‘air wars’ have not begun,” Greenberg said. “Republicans want to take back this long-held seat lost in 2008, and by a margin of 53-38 percent, voters want to see Republicans retake control of the House, rather than leaving it in Democratic hands. How will this seat fit into that equation?”

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This Siena College 29th C.D. survey was conducted September 14-16, 2010 by telephone calls to 613 likely voters drawn from registered voter households. Data was statistically adjusted by party registration rates to ensure representativeness. It has a margin of error of ± 4.0 percentage points. For more information, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at: www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY.